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into truer perspective the potent ecclesiastical element in history which so many non-theological writers seem disposed to ignore.

SHAILER MATHEWS.

*Robespierre: A Study.* By HILAIRE BELLOC, B.A. (New York : Charles Scribner's Sons. 1901. Pp. xiii, 387.)

FROM a literary point of view, Mr. Belloc has written a most attractive book. While not in sympathy with Robespierre, almost wishing, he tells us, when the work was done, "that instead of wandering in such a desert" it had been his task "to follow St. Just and the wars, and to revive the memories of forgotten valour," yet he has seized upon the essential traits of Robespierre's character and constructed a remarkably clear-cut portrait of the man. He has a keen sense for dramatic situations and knows how to make the most of them, not infrequently more than the evidence would seem to justify.

Artistically the work is a success ; scientifically, I fear that it is not. Mr. Belloc realized "that such an attempt at vivid presentation carries with it a certain suspicion when it is applied to history," but added that the details that he had admitted could be "proved true from the witness of contemporaries or from the inference which their descriptions and the public records of the time permit one to draw" (p. xii). If this were really true, if all the details in the book rested on reliable evidence, the work would be as sound scientifically as it is attractive artistically. Unfortunately, it is not true. Mr. Belloc is more artist than historian. An exceedingly active subconscious imagination is not kept sufficiently under control. He takes the work of the historian too lightly, displaying a lack of patience and precision in the study of facts. That he "disclaims research," that he adds nothing to what Hamel has told us of the details of Robespierre's life, is in no wise discreditable, but none of these things justify inaccuracy. Mr. Belloc is inaccurate. I should hesitate to make use of any statement of fact contained in his book, before I had carefully verified it. Moreover, he either consciously states more than evidence permits, or he is unable to draw the line between fact and fiction. I shall cite but one example among many of the overstepping of the bounds between historical science and historical romance. After describing the origin of the Breton Club, Mr. Belloc writes : "This 'Brutus club' Robespierre of course joined. But he was not content with joining only. He was careful to be among its earliest arrivals, he was present at its least-attended meetings" (p. 81). Here are three affirmations ; the first is a very questionable inference, the second and third pure fiction. (See Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins*, I., pp. ii-xviii.)

An excellent illustration of the inability of Mr. Belloc to handle evidence seriously is furnished by his treatment of the question of "Robespierre's Supposed Attempt at Suicide" (Appendix, note iii.). Compare his work with Aulard's treatment of the same subject (*Études et Leçons, Première Série*, pp. 282-300). Mr. Belloc evidently found his evidence in Aulard's study, but note how he has disfigured it in work-

ing it over. On a par with this is the citation of the list of members of the Jacobin Club printed in December 1790 to show the composition of that club in August 1792 (p. 194). A long list might be made of the inaccurate statements contained in the book. One of the most amusing is the assertion that Brissot "was childless and satisfied with power alone" (p. 167). When Brissot was guillotined in 1793, he left three children behind him! (*Mémoires de Brissot*, I. 15.)

Mr. Belloc's translations of Robespierre's speeches are very free, sometimes so free that they are not true to the original. The not infrequent assertion that he "will" believe this or that is devoid of meaning in a historical work; his flippant manner in calling Lafayette a "noodle" (p. 188) and some of his witnesses "liars" is not indicative of good taste, to say the least. Why call the National Assembly a "Parliament" when that term meant a high court of justice in the France of 1789? Finally, Mr. Belloc is not always careful in placing the French accents. Bo should be Bô; Réclus, Reclus. Throughout the book, he writes Herbert in place of Hébert.

The book suggests a psychological problem; is it impossible to combine scientific accuracy with a vivid imagination and unusual talent in the portrayal of character?

FRED MORROW FLING.

*The Writings of James Monroe*. Edited by STANISLAUS MURRAY HAMILTON. Vol. V., 1807-1816. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1901. Pp. xvii, 390.)

IN our review of Vol. IV. (AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW, VI. 596), the apprehension was expressed that the fulness with which Monroe's correspondence down to the end of 1806 had been printed would have to be compensated by disproportionate brevity in the more important period which was to follow. The present volume shows that this fear is beginning to be realized. Four of the ten years which it covers—1807, 1808, 1811 and 1814—were years of great consequence in the life of Monroe and in the history of his relations with the government of the United States. Yet the correspondence of these ten years at the Department of State is represented by a selection not much more than half as ample as that which was used to illustrate the years 1803-1806.

All but about twenty of the letters came from the source named. Of the remainder, the most interesting is the remarkable letter (pp. 53-63), reprinted from the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, of February, 1900, in which Monroe gives instructions and suggestions to a member of his Virginian "campaign committee" of 1808, and which shows, more satisfactorily than anything else which has hitherto come to light, the exact extent to which he then went in aspiration after the presidency. Few specimens of the public correspondence are given, whether with Canning in 1807 or with our ministers abroad and the envoys at Washington after Monroe became Secretary of State. An exception is the well-known letter of July 23, 1811, to Augustus J. Foster.